

Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team (ASTAT)

The Great Basin utilizes ASTATs to provide assistance to Field Units during high levels of aviation activity. The following information describes the implementation, composition, objectives, and responsibilities that characterize these teams.

Mobilization: Any Agency Aviation Manager may request mobilization of ASTATs to the Chair of the Great Basin Coordinating Group if they have any technical or safety related aviation concerns that exceed the Units ability to monitor or resolve. Field units, through any Agency Aviation Manager may also request a ASTAT for their Unit.

Accountability: The ASTAT is responsible to the Great Basin Coordinating Group and when active, the Great Basin Multi-Agency Coordination Group. They are an extension of the Group and are NOT assigned to Incident Command (IC), Area Command (AC), National Multi-agency Coordination Group (NMAC) or Agency Administrator (AA).

Purpose: ASTATs were developed to provide assistance to field units and Aviation Managers during times of heavy use of aviation resources to help identify aviation related issues that may increase during more complex activity periods. This includes clarifying policy, providing assistance in approving aircraft and pilots, and assisting with maintenance issues.

Composition: The composition of a ASTAT will vary. Normal team structure consists of 4-5 members and usually includes a Helicopter Operations Specialist, Aviation Maintenance Specialist, Aviation Safety Specialist, Fixed-wing Specialist, Helicopter Inspector Pilot, Avionics Inspector, and/or Air Tanker Base Specialist. Team members are available from USDA Forest Service, Office of Aircraft Services, USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service and State agencies. Team composition will be interagency whenever possible.

Objective: Assist field units to enhance:

- Safety/Accident Prevention
- Efficiency and effectiveness of aviation operations
- Technical assistance to aircraft managers, flight crews and Unit/Incident Management Team (IMT) personnel

Team Protocol:

- Receive assignment briefing from the Aviation Coordinator of GB-MAC.
- In-brief with the Agency Administer, Fire Management Officer (FMO), and/or Unit Aviation Officer (UAO) discussing Unit/STAT needs and expectations, and identifying local aviation management issues. Contact IMT, IC and/or Air Ops Branch Director (AOBD) discussing same points.
- Provide daily feedback to the effected Regional/State Aviation Managers and Area Commands.
- Conduct an exit brief with AA, FMO and/or UAO, and IC.

Responsibilities: ASTATs will visit helicopter or fixed-wing bases to observe and assist aviation operation personnel to ensure compliance with agency standards, assess management staffing levels, review load calculations and other administrative documents, attend briefings, review safety plans, ensure SAFECOMs are filed, provide recommendations or issue solutions for technical or safety related issues to aviation managers, and approve/re-approve aircraft, pilots and fuel trucks.